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REC'D NOV 2 - 1961
VOL. 4, NO. 4

The
QUARTERLY
Review
of Public
Relations

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OCTOBER
1959

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*The
Quarterly
Review
of
Public
Relations*

Published quarterly in January, April, July, and October for members of the American Public Relations Association. Available to non-members by subscription.

© PR REVIEW PUBLISHING CORPORATION 1959

Subscription rates: \$4.00 per year.
Foreign, \$4.50. Single copies, \$1.00.

Printed in the United States of America by COLORTONE PRESS, Washington, D. C.

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OCTOBER 1959

IN AND ABOUT THIS ISSUE

For those who would like something more than a superficial understanding of the corporate image concept and the techniques involved, we offer "Researching the Corporate Image" by **Dr. James A. Bayton** (page 3). Dr. Bayton is Director of Market Research, National Analysts, Inc., a subsidiary of the Curtis Publishing Company in Philadelphia. He is also professor of psychology, Howard University. Dr. Bayton holds a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. He has published widely in professional journals, including the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* and the *Journal of Marketing*, and did 23 research studies for the Department of Agriculture.

* * *

An intimate knowledge of media is usually assumed to be a basic tool in the kit of all qualified public relations men and women. That this assumption is not always valid is the contention of the author of "The Missing Seventh Sense" (page 9). **John H. Smith, Jr.**, a contributing editor, has appeared in these pages before, including participation in the special interview of Earl Newsum "A Philosophy of Corporate Public Relations" (October, 1957). He is Senior Associate with Howard Chase Associates, Inc., New York, and is a past national president of APRA.

* * *

Most public relations practitioners subscribe to the theory that multiple communication is necessary for maximum effect. But little research has been conducted in public relations to test this. The Milk Industry Foundation, Washington, D. C., has recently completed a useful study of this theory. J. Carroll Bateman, who is director of public relations of the Foundation, reports on the findings in "The Impact of Multiple Communication" (page 12). Mr. Bateman, a contributing editor, is the author of "Individualism vs. Collectivism the Public Relations Implications" in the October, 1958 issue.

In "Western Germany—Public Relations in the Making" (page 19), **Dr. Hanns Dietrich Ahrens** describes the birth and growth of German PR. Dr. Ahrens studied at Frankfurt University and Haverford College, where he held a scholarship from the Institute of International Education. In 1940 Dr. Ahrens entered the German Foreign Service and, after the War, established himself as a public relations counselor. In that capacity he has worked on the Eastern Expellee problem, the reconstitution of the German coal industry, and the economic promotion of Schleswig-Holstein. This experience, together with his understanding of American thought, led to his appointment as chairman of the All-German Committee of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Germany.

* * *

To support his point that in public relations the idea's the thing, **Stanley Baar**, president of Barber & Baar Associates, Inc., New York, opens his company's files. His article, "The Importance of Focal Ideas in Public Relations Programs" (page 27) cites four specific programs in which a strong central idea played a key role. Mr. Baar, an alumnus of New York University, was a sometime editor on the *New York Journal of Commerce*. His earlier associations in PR include Ivy Lee and T. J. Ross. One of Mr. Baar's own focal ideas for public relations is the need for better evaluation techniques.

* * *

One of the marks of a professional man is the use he makes of the literature in his field. For doctors and lawyers, for instance, current literature is also a matter of survival. Details of a new drug or a court decision must be obtained despite the pressures of time. For those who aspire to professional status for public relations, we respectfully suggest the same close attention to current writing in and around our field, including the social sciences. As a help to the busy practitioners we offer each quarter **Don Colen's** provocative book reviews (page 33), and *Scanning the Professional Journals* (page 25) by **Dr. Donald W. Krimel**.

The Editors' Page

pr When an industrial corporation, like an intrepid adventurer, loads its political barge with public issues, mans it with assorted experts, and casts off for stormy political waters, it finds few navigational aids to steer by.

Only a few of the reefs and shoals are marked. Section 313 of the Federal Corrupt Practices Act flashes a warning over contributions to elect Senators or Representatives to Congress.

Section 5 of the Hatch Act prohibits contributions by government contractors "for any political purpose or use" in connection with federal, state or local elections.

Some 30-plus states have corrupt practices acts to serve as warning buoys off their shores.

Apart from these, the waters are uncharted, clouds of uncertainty obscure the Constitution above, and navigation is by dead reckoning alone.

Now hear this! All public relations personnel report to the chart room. Plot courses to worthy objectives favored by the prevailing winds of public opinion.

We shall not labor the figure further, but we hope we have made our point. Political expertness may not be a particular public relations man's dish, but the use that is made of it certainly falls within the area of what should be his responsibility.

Insofar as a corporation's political activity focuses on the education and activation of employees in the fulfillment of *their* citizenship obligations within the parties of their choice, the activity is praiseworthy without further question.

But, insofar as a corporation employs its funds to further *its* political interests, both its means and ends will be suspect in the public mind unless and until a record has been compiled demonstrating that the methods are not improper and the goals attained are clearly in the public interest.

No greater challenge has ever confronted the public relations man than this. *Bon voyage* to all. ●

SOME OF THE PROBLEMS IN . . .

Researching the Corporate Image

by JAMES A. BAYTON

THERE are two basic premises in corporate image research. First, there is the view that the corporation (or more exactly, the corporate name) is associated with a pattern of mental impressions in the mind of the public, or some particular segment of it. Secondly, it is thought that this pattern of mental impressions has some degree of influence upon the behavior of the public with respect to the company and its products.

Certain critical points in the above statement must be noted. The "company" is considered as having separate and unique existence. The complexity of the company is represented in the company's name. In the final analysis, we are concerned with the pattern of mental impressions generated by the *name* of the company. The counterpart of such research within academic psychology is found in research on national and ethnic stereotypes—research demonstrating that "the Italians" are perceived as being excitable, "the English" as being humorless and "the French" as being somewhat immoral. Such national names evoke quite definite images, despite the fact that each name represents something highly complex. Another critical point is the fact that we are dealing with mental phenomena—the impressions, ideas or associations stimulated by the company name. Research on the corporate image must, therefore, produce a reliable reporting of the mental content aroused when a given public responds to a company name.

This article will discuss aspects of corporate image research methods. Dinsmore's recent article discussed the concept of corporate image research and emphasized its implications for people in public relations*. It should be obvious, however, that before one starts to work on "build-

* Dinsmore, William H., "Building a Favorable Corporate Image," *pr*, January, 1959.

ing a corporate image" he should know what the current image is of his company. Our concern here is with research concepts and procedures and the implications of these to understanding and appraising the corporate image. We will try to demonstrate that considerations within the area of research methods have implications for the art of building corporate images.

Personality Traits Attributed to Organizations

The first problem in corporate image research is to settle upon some systematic approach to investigating the particular mental content involved. The essential criterion here is that a frame of reference must be used which is meaningful to the public—one that the public can grasp and manipulate mentally. This leads to our first assumption about corporate image *research*—in corporate image research the company is transformed into a human-like entity. Our view is that the company takes on human characteristics in the "eyes" or perception of the public; that the company is perceived as having a personality. Now, how do we describe personalities in our every-day language? We do this by ascribing traits to the person we are discussing. Joe is a "well-liked" guy; Harry certainly is full of "self-confidence"; Sam is a "stuffy" person.

If it is true that, in the perception of the public, the company is humanized, it follows that human personality traits should be perceived as adhering to it. We would start our corporate image research, then, by developing a list of trait-names in order to see which are considered as being descriptive of the company. If you turn to the dictionary in your search for trait-names you will end up with a list of more than 18,000 items. Obviously, a much smaller set of trait-names is required in corporate image research.

Fortunately, the literature of psychology contains a number of studies directed toward defining basic personality traits. An intensive review of this research on personality traits produced a set of about 30 items which had the surface appearance of being different from each other. Here are a few examples: *economic-minded*—interested in income and profits; *social-minded*—interested in being of service to people; *exhibitionism*—tries to attract attention to self; *order*—being well-organized; *aggression*—driving hard to gain goals; *aloofness*; etc. We would not use a term such as exhibitionism in the interviewing, of course. Rather, we have developed brief statements which are designed to define each trait. The extent to which these traits apply in the corporate image is determined by a card-sort, scaling technique.

How Traits Are Evaluated

The pattern of personality traits found to be associated with a given company must be evaluated on the basis of at least three criteria: the image management desires for the company, the images associated with competitors, and the ideal image for the industry category represented. Cross-comparison of these three different sets of images is necessary if one is to evaluate the image-position of his company. Do management's objectives coincide with what the public considers as the ideal of the industry category? To what extent does the current image of your company match the image that management wishes the company to have? Are the traits that are highly desired in the ideal company more prominent in your competitor's image than in your own? Considerations such as these point the need to include the above three categories of image into a corporate image research project.

One of the difficulties encountered in this personality trait approach to the corporate image is the problem of the meanings of the traits to the respondents. Two respondents could say that "aggressive" describes a certain company. For one respondent this could represent a highly favorable characteristic; for the other it could have highly unfavorable connotations. "Conservative" can be a troublesome trait in this research. It apparently can have positive value in some industrial categories and negative value in others.

In order to handle this problem of positive or negative implications of the traits, the card-sort, scaling technique for the ideal company is based upon the dimension of desirability—undesirability. When the final results are all in, the statistical distribution for each trait must be inspected, not only in terms of the average scale-position of each, but also in terms of the variability or scatter of scores around the average. When this analysis is made the following characteristics of the traits are revealed:

1. *Highly desirable traits*—those with high averages and low variability or scattering of scores (showing high degree of agreement that the trait is highly desirable).
2. *Highly undesirable traits*—the same as above, but at the low (undesirable) end of the scale.
3. *Neutral or weak traits*—traits falling toward the middle of the desirable-undesirable scale.
4. *Conflict of meaning traits*—traits which tend to be placed by many respondents at the desirable end of the scale and by many others at the undesirable end (bimodal distribution). In one study "shrewd" showed such a distribution. For many this trait reflected intelligence; for others the implication of the trait was

scheming. Or you might get such a distribution with "conservative." Here the meaning of the trait is not so much in conflict, as the significance of the trait to the respondent.

5. *Ambiguous traits*—traits which tend to be assigned almost equally to all points on the scale. This indicates that the trait is not a discriminating element in the image; it is not pertinent to the industrial category or company being studied.

Such inspection of these distributions is a necessity in this approach to corporate image research. For one thing it will spot the "boomerang" characteristics, if they exist. These would be the traits which fall into the conflict of meaning group. Attempts to promote such a trait as an aspect of a company's image could run the risk of arousing negativism among considerable proportions of the public.

Content and Source of Image Determine Strategy

In corporate image research it is necessary to make a sharp distinction between the content of the image and the perceived sources of this image. The content of the image is represented in the personality characteristics associated with the company. The perceived sources of the image are those aspects of the company which the respondent "sees" as being responsible for the company having the traits he uses to describe it. Two respondents can describe a certain company as being aggressive. When asked why they say this, one might justify his view by referring to activities or mannerisms of salesmen; the other might use the company's advertising to justify his view. Here, salesmen and advertising are perceived sources of company image. Follow-through questions accompanied by intensive probing on the part of the interviewer produces data on the role of products, advertising, salesmen, pricing policies, services, etc. as perceived factors contributing to the corporate image.

This particular point can be an area of difficulty and conflict between the client and the researcher. Since the emphasis in this research is upon revealing the *mental* content of the public, there can be no guarantee that some specific matters of concern to the company will emerge. For example, suppose that a newly designed package had been on the market for several months. Someone within the company will be deeply interested in what this new package has contributed to the corporate image. It is altogether possible, however, that in a sample of 2,000 respondents not one will mention the package design as a perceived source of the company image. One would be forced to conclude that the new package, as such, had made no directly conscious contribution to the company image. This in no way means that this package had no impact. It could well have

made a contribution to the *product image*, leading to increased sales. And, this in turn, could lead consumers to talk about quality of product as the source of their favorable image of the company, not realizing the role the package played.

This writer likes to think of the distinction between the content of the image and the perceived sources of the image in terms of strategy and tactics. Analysis of the company image characteristics and evaluation of them in terms of the three criteria mentioned—management's desires, the images of competitors, and the ideal image for the industrial category represented—should lead to decisions as to specific corporate image objectives. What traits need to be introduced into the image? What traits, already present, need to be strengthened? What negative traits must be worked against? This level of concern represents the strategy problem. In contrast, the analysis of the perceived sources of the image points to the tactical avenues to be employed in achieving the image objectives. If the negative image characteristic to be dealt with is "aggressiveness" and the perceived source is the company's advertising, the tactical problem has been indicated. On the other hand, if the perceived source of this particular trait is the salesmen, a different tactical problem is presented.

In one recent corporate image research project the data pointed to the salesmen as one of the primary sources of the company's image—and they were definitely making a negative contribution. In contrast to the salesmen of a major competitor, this company's salesmen were said to be drab and colorless. The competitor's salesmen were seen as being youthful and dynamic. This lead, coupled with other information from the research, initiated a review of the company's personnel policies for its salesmen.

Some final comments. In research on the corporate image one must be prepared to find that a given industrial category, or a given company within the category, is rather "faceless." The public has great difficulty in ascribing any traits to it. The public could have a highly defined product image but be quite vague as to the characteristics of the company behind the product. This was found in a research project for a company which has two basic lines of goods—one for general consumers and the other for industrial users. Consumers in the general public were unable to give company image characteristics for either this company or its major competitors. Industrial purchasers, however, had definite images of this company and its competitors.

Does Image Influence Public's Behavior?

It was originally stated that one of the premises in corporate image research is the belief that the company image has some degree of influence upon the behavior of the public with respect to buying its products. This writer feels that it would be very difficult to measure either the validity of this concept or, if it is valid, the degree of contribution made by the company image in contrast to the product image. It would appear that the justification for company image research must rest upon the proposition that the image of the company contributes something to establishing a receptive climate for the transmission of messages about products and for actual perception of the products themselves. Similarly, the actual influence of the corporate image upon the behavior of such groups as stockholders and employees would be difficult to measure in a definitive manner. (Of course, advertising is faced with a similar problem of being able to make definitive evaluation of its effectiveness.)

The second of our original two premises, then, is under somewhat of a cloud. The first premise, however, is not—that the corporation can be associated with a pattern of mental impressions in the minds of segments of the population. The research evidence indicates that companies can be perceived as having personality patterns. Furthermore, a systematic approach to the research problem involved can produce not only some interesting data but can point to very practical management strategy and tactics. ●



Ghostwriting

"Write as I think," said the boss, "instead
Of that usual old stuff that's trite."

"But what do you think?" I asked, and he said,
"Why that's what I want you to write!"

—NL

Public Relations Problem

Holier than thou is an attitude
That does not get us far.

It is met with thankless ingratitude
Despite the fact that we are.

—NL

KNOWLEDGE OF MEDIA'S NEEDS . . .

The Missing SEVENTH SENSE

by JOHN H. SMITH, JR.

THE public library may seem to be a strange place for any public relations man to spend much of his time. Yet, there is an undeveloped art in public relations that more man-hours at the library would help to mature. We might call it "the mind of the media."

The public relations man knows his product, knows his craft. But, he does not always know his market very well.

As a result, and to the client's disappointment, he often tries to sell the impossible. He scatters well-manufactured buckshot on a woods full of media and misses the larger game which a rifle might have bagged. He waits for the mammoth news-break which will somehow at last justify *Fortune's* interest—rather than ascertaining *Fortune's* interest and building something to meet it. He often overlooks word-of-mouth, group action, window displays, and dozens of other means of public relations communication that are not measured by ruler and kinescope.

Is this too big a job for one public relations director or account man? Yes, it is. But, in the absence of a facility, the conscientious public relations man must somehow attempt to perform it. His failure to do so is often the result of the necessary infringement of other work upon the time needed to maintain continuing study of media.

One cannot know the market merely by talking to correspondents, editors, program producers, club leaders. In essence, he must *be* these people. He must read or observe what they do, sense why they do it, and think enough like them to guess what they are likely to do next. He must know their audiences as well as them-as-an-audience.

How the Needed Knowledge May Be Acquired

Time for reflection, for solid long-range planning, is seldom provided in the contract or the job specifications. What we are arguing, really, is that there is a yawning gap in the profession that some well-knit group of specialists ought to close. There is no corollary of the advertising agency media department in public relations. There is no focusing of diagnosticians.

It will be as good for the media as well as for public relations when something is done about this. For the news bureaus so busily attending to client wants, making contacts, and grinding out releases will then provide bona fide services to journalism, broadcasting, other forms of communication. And they will do a better job for their clients in the process!

Properly equipped through intelligent observation that leads to a depth of knowledge, public relations can be an ever more welcomed extension of the editorial and creative arms of media—reaching into places that would otherwise be “lost continents” of good reading, good looking, and good listening.

Difficulties of Becoming Better Informed

This task of “properly equipping” for such analysis is not a simple one, however. It is complex—and endless. Nowhere is there such a vast panorama of public relations media as the United States contains.

There is the consumer magazine and the trade magazine. The homemaker's show, the news show, the so-called situation comedy series. The public platform. The professional journal. The syndicate service and the comic strip. The PTA meeting program. The business exhibit and the department store. The foreign language press. The book.

Even here, where we have touched only a few of them, it is obvious that there are hundreds of variations within the categories. Further, the modes and manners of any unit within a media group are likely to fluctuate—without too much advance notice—in harmony with coming economic and political situations as well as fads and fancies among readers, listeners, and viewers.

But, it is still more complex than this! It differs and changes geographically. Public relationswise, one market is *not* just like another. Different voices, even different inflections of voice are followed. What was a smash on Broadway may well be ignored on Euclid. The most persuasive writer in the West may not even be known to those around the conference table in Manhattan.

Who Are the Cedric Adams's of Memphis, Seattle?

For sheer impact, it is much better to have an item in Cedric Adams' column than anywhere else in the Minneapolis *Star-Journal*, including the front page. Folks throughout the mid-northwest read this feature as habitually as the weather box. They take buying and thinking cues from it. They store parts of it in the brain for conversation material.

Adams has a certain distinctive style, of course. There are some subjects he writes about, some he seldom touches. What he does write about has a unique twist or angle to it.

The most skilled public relations craftsman in New York will never get a mention in this column without appreciating these factors. Nor, certainly, can he tap what is probably the most influential medium in the Twin Cities market if he is ignorant of Adams to begin with.

Fortunately, a promotion-minded newspaper behind a promotion-wise fellow has made the communications world quite conscious of Cedric Adams and has probably obviated such ignorance in this one case. But, what about Memphis? What about Seattle? What about Huntington, West Virginia?

What newspaper page or feature is most motivating in Columbus, Ohio? Do department store clerks in Dallas find a great rush on the ribbon counter when hair-bow fashions are displayed on one particular TV program? Is there a certain clergyman in Denver whose sermons are noted for starting community action?

Then, when these questions have been answered, there are many more. How do these channels of communication operate? What type of material is "a natural fit" for them? What subjects are they likely to deal with—and in what way?

Accumulating this priceless fund of awareness and keeping it up to date across the complex of American life—trades, regions, groups, cultures, recreations, educational pursuits—this is no easy task.

But, it needs to be done. If public relations is to wear the mantle of professional service, it must know its media markets like the attorney knows his legal precedents and court citations.

This is the ground from which sage public relations counsel and superior public relations accomplishment grows. It is also the key to personal achievement—and, thus, to satisfaction.

It is a continuing pursuit to maintain what we might call "the seventh sense" because it makes tangible and mastered techniques fully effective. ●

A RESEARCH REPORT ON . . .

*The Impact of
Multiple Communication*

by J. CARROLL BATEMAN

THE advancement of public relations as a sound and accepted practice depends to a considerable extent upon the ability of public relations practitioners to develop tested principles for action. To date, there has been greater reliance upon "intuition" than upon principle, but the standards of professionalism demand more than intuition or common sense as a basis for action.

The major fault in the practice of public relations probably is the bland acceptance of certain assumptions which are basic to our methods of operation. Too many of these assumptions have not received the rigid testing that is required before an assumption may become a principle; and even when testing has occurred, public relations people generally have been remiss about documenting such instances, so that their hypotheses and results may be examined and retested by others.

Until and unless we have tested and retested basic assumptions—and have proved that they are valid, not only in a peculiar circumstance but in every (or almost every) circumstance, we can hardly claim that our approach to problems in communications and human relations is a professional one. Whether or not we are interested in making public relations a profession, certainly most of us are interested in making public relations effective. And effectiveness lies also in the development and application of sound principles. It is in this spirit that the following case study in the impact of what might be termed "multiple communication" is offered.

It is axiomatic that opinions are built upon information (or misinformation, as the case may be—the validity of the information is not pertinent to our discussion at this point). It is also axiomatic that this in-

formation must be transmitted, in the case of public relations, from the minds of those interested in developing attitudes to the minds of the intended audience. The techniques for transmission are many and varied; psychologists have provided a great deal of information on the relative merits or impacts of these various techniques. It is widely accepted, for example, that face-to-face personal communication is a superior form of transmission; and that audio-visual transmission (as in the form of television or the sound motion picture) is superior to audio alone (as in the case of radio).

Correlative to this is the assumption that multiple transmission of the same information, to the same audience or audiences, utilizing various techniques, increases effectiveness. This is not an unreasonable assumption; but documentation of it in public relations practice is sparse.

Milk Industry Survey Offers Evidence

In this connection, a survey conducted by the Milk Industry Foundation may have some evidence to offer. The survey was conducted among nearly 1,800 dairy farmers in the United States to define various aspects of their relationships with and their attitudes toward the fluid milk processors and distributors who buy and market their milk. The survey was conducted by a widely recognized research firm.

All of the respondents in the survey were interviewed personally on their own farms, and they were selected on the basis of an area probability sample which guaranteed an accurate cross-section of the dairy farmer population.

The survey questionnaire was complex, with 114 questions on many different topics; it is not the purpose here to go into all of its ramifications. One series of questions within the over-all context, however, bears on the matter of the impact and effectiveness of multiple communications efforts.

Background to Farmer-Dealer Relationship

In order to identify the significance of these series of questions and the responses to them, it is necessary first to provide some background information on the customary relationships between the dairy farmers and the milk dealers who buy, process and market the milk. The relationship, obviously, is primarily an economic one. Because of contractual arrangements conducted on behalf of the farmer by his marketing cooperative, and because in most cases the price paid to the farmer for his milk is regulated by a Federal or State agency, control of this economic relationship does not rest with the individual farmer and/or with the individual dairy

except in relatively few instances. Thus, generally speaking, the farm price for milk is not an important factor in influencing the farmer's attitude toward the individual dairy that purchases his milk.

Apart from the economic relationship, certain basic communications are essential to the relationship between the farmer and the buyer of his milk. For example, certain sanitary standards must be met by the farmer in the production of the milk. It is usually necessary for the dairy to keep the farmer informed on how he is meeting or failing to meet these standards, and on changes in these technical requirements from time to time. Thus, there is absolute necessity for at least rudimentary communications channels between dairy farmers and milk dealers. And even where the dealer's understanding of the value of communications may be sadly lacking, some channels of communication will exist.

Among the more enlightened milk dealers, however, there is a general recognition of the value of keeping the farmer informed on other matters as well. Such dealers have found it desirable to inform the farmer about such things as the milk marketing picture and outlook, the economic condition of the industry and how the industry may be affected by external economic developments, the merchandising efforts being conducted by the company to improve the sale of milk products, etc. Among those milk dealers who have the most sophisticated knowledge of communications, extensive efforts also may be devoted to providing "talk-back" channels for the farmers to use in relaying their ideas, wants and desires to milk industry management. Thus, among the dealers who are most cognizant of the importance of communications, we find an organized effort and a plan for building and maintaining effective two-way channels of communication with their respective milk producers.

Type of Communications Used

In fundamental form, the common channels of communication from milk dealer to dairy farmer have four basic variations:

1. Materials mailed by the dairy to the farmer (these range from letters to printed matter, and in the case of the larger dairies may include regularly published newsletters or magazines).
2. Personal calls on the dairy farmer by "field men" representing dairy management. These field men are usually trained agricultural specialists in milk production problems and techniques.
3. Meetings sponsored by dairy management, to which dairy farmers are invited for discussion of their common interests.
4. Interpretive plant tours held by the dairy for the farmers supplying the plant.

Channels of communication from dairy farmer to milk plant management usually are much more informal, except in the instances of the largest dairy companies where opinion surveys by means of personal interviews or mailed questionnaires occasionally may be conducted among the farmers. Such instances, however, are relatively rare. Hence, insofar as the Foundation survey was concerned, no attempt was made to differentiate among the forms of communication that a farmer might use in transmitting his ideas and attitudes to dairy management. The survey simply attempted to find out whether the dairy farmer believed he had means of communicating to management when he deemed it important, whether he did this by telephone, by letter, by personal visit, or otherwise. This matter of the individual's belief in his ability to communicate to management when it is necessary was deemed to be the crucial factor.

The Foundation survey attempted to measure the relative impact of each of these fundamental methods of communication in terms of its effect upon the farmer's over-all attitude toward the dairy that purchased his milk. Further, the survey attempted to evaluate the over-all effect of a rounded two-way communications set-up as compared with the "average" situation, or norm.

In order to measure this effect, each farmer respondent was asked to evaluate his relationship with the dairy that purchased his milk in terms of whether it was "very satisfactory," "just all right," or "very unsatisfactory." Among all dairy farmers who sell milk to fluid milk dealers (omitting those who sell to cheese and butter factories, dry milk processing plants, etc.), 62.2 percent said they enjoyed very satisfactory relationships with the firms that purchased their milk. This, then, constituted the norm, since this group represented farmers who enjoy good communications with their dairies, as well as those who have mediocre communications or none at all.

Value of Two-way Communication Shown

The first subdivision of the farmer group was in terms of those who believe they have ways to communicate to their milk dealers, as compared with the farmers who did not (see Table I). Here a statistically significant difference immediately became apparent. Among farmers who believe that such channels of communication are available to them, 70.4 percent said they enjoy a very satisfactory relationship with the purchasing company. But, among those farmers who do not believe such channels of

communication are available, only 51.1 percent consider their relationship with dealers to be very satisfactory.

The value of meetings and plant tours also was outstandingly obvious. Of the farmers who had attended meetings held by their respective milk dealers, 75.6 percent said their relationships with the dealers are very satisfactory. But among the farmers who had not been invited to such meetings, only 56.1 percent consider their relationships to be very satisfactory.

Among the farmers who have made plant tours in the dairies that buy their milk, 71.9 percent believe their relationships with the dairies are very satisfactory. But, among the farmers who have not been invited to make such tours, only 50.7 percent feel that their relationships are very satisfactory.

The impact of the meetings and plant tours is further attested by the reactions that the farmers themselves report to such efforts. More than 92 percent of the dairy farmers who have attended meetings held by their milk dealers report that such meetings are worthwhile, and more than 96 percent of the farmers who have made interpretive tours of the plants that process their milk report these tours to be worth the time and effort spent in taking them.

Letters, printed materials and other items of information sent through the mails from the dairy to the farmer appear to have much less effect. Among the farmers who say that they regularly receive such mailed materials, 72.5 percent feel their relationships with their dealers are very satisfactory. But among the farmers who do not receive such materials, 68.2 percent also say their relationships with dealers are very satisfactory. The difference of 4.3 percent is barely significant statistically.

Face-to-Face Meetings Yielded Unexpected Results

Visits by field representatives, oddly enough, seem to have an adverse effect upon the farmer's attitude, if they have any effect at all. Some 61.6 percent of the farmers who say that a dairy field man calls on them regularly feel that their relationships with dealers are very satisfactory; but among the farmers who say that a field man does not call on them, 62.5 percent say they have very satisfactory relationships with dealers. Here is an effort at "face-to-face" communication that clearly is not living up to its reputation. After careful analysis of the survey results, we concluded that the cause of this apparent contradiction lies in the fact that field men usually call upon dairy farmers when the farmers are having trouble meeting technical standards. Perhaps the farmer's milk must even

be rejected by the plant. Thus, the occasion for the field man's visit frequently is an unpleasant one. In support of this hypothesis, the survey shows that the field man almost invariably talks to the farmer about technical matters. Only 3.7 percent of the farmers say that the field man ever talks of other things, such as market conditions, prices, etc., and in only 1.2 percent of the cases is the field man reported to have discussed the processing company and its products.

Study Offers Strong Evidence, Not Final Proof

What is the totality of effect upon a dairy farmer who enjoys all of these methods of communication—both ways—with the buyer and processor of his milk? The answer to this question is significant. Among the farmers who sell to fluid milk dealers, if we separate those who say they enjoy all of these forms of communication, we find that an over-

TABLE I

HOW CERTAIN COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES AFFECT THE DAIRY FARMER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE DAIRY THAT BUYS HIS MILK

How do you get along with the people who buy your milk?

	Very Satisfactory %	Just All Right %	Very Unsatisfactory %
All dairy farmers selling to fluid milk dealers	62.2	35.4	2.4
Farmers who have ways to communicate their ideas to milk processors	70.4	27.4	2.2
Farmers who do not have ways to communicate to processors	51.1	45.9	3.0
Farmers who receive information from processors	72.5	24.9	2.6
Farmers who do not receive information from processors	68.2	29.9	1.9
Farmers who have a field man call on them	61.6	36.6	1.8
Farmers who do not have a field man call on them	62.5	34.6	2.9
Farmers who have attended processors' meetings	75.6	20.7	3.7
Farmers who have not been invited to processors' meetings	56.1	41.4	2.5
Farmers who have made plant tours	71.9	25.8	2.3
Farmers not invited to make plant tours	50.7	46.7	2.6
Farmers who have all means of two-way communication with their milk buyers	80.7	17.5	1.8

whelming majority, 80.7 percent, report they have very satisfactory relationships with the buyers of their milk. This contrasts with the 62.2 percent "norm" previously indicated.

In our survey, we were led to the general conclusion that the communications network between dairy farmers and milk dealers is inadequate; but that when the dairy farmer feels he has ample opportunity to convey his ideas and wishes to the buyer of his milk, and when the farmer is the target of a variety of effective communications techniques, his attitude toward the buyer of his milk is inevitably improved.

No one test of a hypothesis in the social science field can be considered conclusive. This report, involving only some 1,800 dairy farmers, is not offered as such. It is offered only because the author believes that it lends support to the validity of one of the basic hypotheses which most public relations practitioners employ in their day-to-day efforts—the hypothesis that multiple communications techniques, repeating essentially the same messages and aimed at the same audience, tend to provide an impact that is greater than any single communications technique. Whether the increased impact justifies the increased effort and expenditure must be measured in respect to the individual situation in each instance. Nevertheless, if maximum impact is desired, then the simultaneous employment of two or more communications techniques to the same end will tend to provide such a result.

The present survey clearly indicates the value of multiple communications efforts in winning favorable attitudes; for the percentage increases in favorable attitudes, as the techniques of communication are multiplied, clearly are greater than can be attributed to statistical variations. And no other factors in the instant study appeared to have as great a bearing on attitudes.



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A FIRST-HAND REPORT FROM . . .

Western Germany— Public Relations in the Making

by HANNS DIETRICH AHRENS

WHY is Germany—a country whose inventiveness, technical skill, workmanship and genius for industrial organization are so extraordinary—so backward in the field of public relations? This question is asked by many highly competent visitors, and though it may be based on a misconception, it should be answered.

A frequent first comment from visitors is that in many German industrial organizations the relationship between management and workers clings to a crumbling paternalistic pattern. Management stays on one side of a glass house; workers and trade union leaders, often brandishing old-fashioned ideologies, are on the other. German organizations often appear to Americans recently arrived from the States to lack team spirit, flexibility, and open-mindedness.

One answer is that the visitor over-simplifies. The present situation in Western Germany rests on the past, and changes must be made in terms of the past. Physical and technological rebuilding of German industry after the end of Allied dismantling and the beginning of ERP (Marshall Aid) absorbed all energies. During the first post-war years pioneers in public relations found it difficult to make their final product, good will, attractive enough to absorb a few minutes' time of the overworked industrial managers and government officials who were giving every bit of their strength to rebuilding a country from the ashes.

But there is a second point. It is not easy for a visitor to realize what is already being done in Western German public relations. If a German happened to be dropped into the midst of the life of St. Petersburg, Florida, or Cleveland, Ohio, he would be equally unable to measure the

situation.

Yet, foreign comments on public relations in Germany are fully justified to this extent: Though pioneers have silently brought about important changes, the general situation today in West Germany is similar to that of U. S. industry in the twenties. A number of older German industrialists today are taking the same intense interest as was taken by the great barons of U. S. industry, though in both cases without admitting in public what is thought in private.

Growing Pains of PR Profession

The public relations profession here is still in the embryonic stage. Though it may be a comparatively late birth (in view of the progress in other nations), chances for a healthy and perhaps unexpectedly progressive development have improved lately. It is not impossible that the demand for trained German public relations practitioners by associations, organizations and firms will soon be out of proportion to the little group of available German public relations men.

In 1950 it seemed doubtful whether the public relations approach to group relations in the dawning new industrial age of Western Germany would take root at all. Today the outlook has improved, though not as greatly as my friends and I had hoped nine years ago. Compared with the \$600,000,000 spent for advertising by Western German industry alone, the present sporadic expenditures for real public relations purposes are indeed small.

But there is a much brighter side to the situation. An impressive number of German firms and institutions are already engaged in some genuine public relations activity. The establishment of house organs, suggestion systems, press conferences in a more modern style than before, and original ways of celebrating anniversaries indicates progress. There have also been experiments in finding better and more informal ways of holding shareholders meetings.

PR-influenced advertising testimonials have shown men like Professor Ludwig Erhard, the artificer of German recovery, with his homely smile and his eternal cigar, explaining their ideas in everyday wording.

In some cases, American firms have set fine public relations examples on German territory. When Canada Dry opened a new branch plant at Mülheim/Ruhr, for instance, it used the original approach of having its American president honor the company's "youngest daughter" on German ground. This ceremony received a fine reaction. Since, as a German, I had the privilege of handling the press relations during this occasion, I know

that my compatriots from the German press and the local authorities actually felt proud to have an American plant open on local territory, using German personnel and machinery.

Practitioners Not Accepted at Policy Level

Nevertheless, Western Germany still has no profession of PR counseling in any way comparable to the professions of law, medicine, or government administration. The public relations man, enthusiastically devoted to his productive work, is still comparatively unrecognized, even though he has clients of repute and jobs contributing to the shaping of public opinion.

Those in West Germany today who edit house organs, analyze the world's economic and political news for an industrial boss or the governor of a state, work to improve management-labor relations, or prepare an industrial film to tell the story of a firm or a branch of industry to a large public are nearly all known to be "specialists" of great skill. But there are few men in public relations who actually help to shape the vital decisions of large corporations or who function as the recognized "conscience" of the firm, shaping with authority *all* phases of its relations with a public that may be world-wide.

I do know of able public relations men (usually bearing some other title) in large firms who still have to consult their superiors before even printing a guide to the factory for foreign visitors.

"Public Relations"—A Controversial Term

The tax authorities classify all public relations counselors as Freie Journalisten (independent journalists). The German synonym for public relations is Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, now that the rather misleading term Vertrauenswerbung (Advertising for confidence) has more and more disappeared from public use.

Some Germans believe that too many words from the American language have invaded our good old German language. When explaining to my compatriots before Chamber meetings why no substitute should be used for the term public relations, I mention that there are certain words which simply cannot be translated without sacrificing their flavor and parts of their meaning. I mention that, to date, no suitable English translation of Richard Wagner's "leitmotiv" has been found, so that Americans of today still use that term. My listeners then are satisfied, suggesting that the word be imbued with real meaning by better interpretation.

Some Examples of Progress

The Federation of Chambers of Commerce in Germany has a divi-

sion entitled Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, which works with the public and which is headed by Dr. Albert Ockl, a trained PR man who gained a place in the sun by his and his co-workers' untiring efforts to explain the productive value of his work to the Chambers. In the Ministry of Defense at Bonn the Amt für Öffentlichkeitsarbeit does effective work, though the Social Democrats, on February 7, 1956, made objections to it in the lower house.

A large industrial firm in the Ruhr is presently evolving a plan for an Abteilung für Öffentlichkeitsarbeit und Werbung (Department for Public Relations and Advertising). The Board told me at a staff conference that they definitely want to give public relations priority over more advertising, or, as the president termed it: "*For our firm as a firm we want to find a way to replace with public relations some expensive big-scale advertising of our products. This means developing a new, unique style in our communications with the public.*" This president had recently been in the States and was open to new ideas. He had a vague idea that the primary purpose of real public relations is the establishing of self-evident facts plus some publication in place of the launching of mere "publicity stunts." He consulted a public relations counselor in order to get an idea as to which kind of facts should be established to gain good will.

Why Such Babylonian Confusion of Words?

As regards public relations experts who work simultaneously for a number of firms as independent consultants and are paid for each PR assignment or are on the basis of retainer fee (in a more progressive stage of client-adviser relationship), the problem in Germany has been to develop any general belief that such a profession exists. Men like the president of a modern enterprise such as the one mentioned above are still rare. The greatest obstacle is confusion as to what the public relations expert does. Some seem to think public relations is magic, close to mesmerism. Some are sceptical about this "American innovation." Some have more concrete ideas, which I might quote from my notebook for the amusement of my American readers.

"Public relations is a management trick for dealing with the workers in such a way as to paralyze our educational work. It's a new invention of Wall Street"—(from a trade unions boss in the Ruhr).

"Public relations—isn't it something like propaganda and advertising—only more clever—you don't find out until you have been sold on the PR target"—(from a banker in Southern Germany).

"Public relations—isn't it an ingenious art of getting a contract

from the Allied Forces by inviting the procurement officer to a hunting party with the German building contractor, or by finding out when the Quartermaster Corps will have to place large orders before the end of the fiscal year"—(from a building contractor in the Kaiserslautern area, 1953; his confusion was caused by the fact that a number of professional "five per centers" had visited him, posing as "public relations men with special contacts."

"Public relations—it's a plan for making foreign visitors feel at home in one's plant, since one simply cannot devote one's time to them oneself"—(the vice president of a large industrial concern at Düsseldorf, who was surprised when I tried to explain that public relations men are not merely Frühstücksdirektoren [breakfast directors], though the reception of VIP's may be part of their official duties).

Education Started

Very fortunately, among American PR firms on German soil, Hill and Knowlton International (with European headquarters at Düsseldorf and Dr. Manfred Zapp, a German of a well-known Düsseldorf family, as manager) has started educational work by issuing, since November, 1957, an advisory letter called "PR" for German industry. It contributes to the gradual overcoming of the afore-mentioned misconceptions about meaning, technique, business ethics and the productivity value of public relations.

The official educational institution of the American Government in West Germany, the Amerika Haus organization, which is guided from Washington, D. C., has not yet directed the attention of its various German publics to public relations as an integral part of modern civilization in the United States. Whatever the reasons may be behind this reluctance, German public relations men believe that the U. S. Government so far has not made use of an important tool of good will and means of interpreting American thinking. Its use would be helpful for United States policy as well as for the young PR of West Germany.

It is also believed that such a program could be aided by the fine examples set by public-relations-minded American affiliates on German soil, such as Yale and Towne, Adam Opel (General Motors), TWA, PAA, Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co., ESSO, and by many others out of about 400 firms doing business here, as well as by German firms pioneering in PR.

American-German Teamwork Desirable in PR

During a recent lecture and round table with members of a German Chamber of Commerce, I found hearty approval of my statement that

teamwork in the field of public relations would bridge a gap which has existed for years in U. S.-German relations. There was agreement that this hoped-for development could not be achieved overnight. But when I told my surprised audience about the work performed by the School of Public Relations and Communications of Boston University alone and of the sympathetic interest of such fine organizations as the American Public Relations Association and the Public Relations Society of America in the development of public relations over here, the reaction was one of eagerness to acquire more knowledge and understanding.

The best firms in Germany are concerned about the *ethics* of public relations. They want to know whether the primary purpose of public relations is material, or even materialistic, in nature or whether its purpose is to improve human relationships as a matter of merit in itself.

It may be surprising that one of the participants in these discussions, a recognized, successful German businessman, told us during the round table: "Frankly speaking, I was somewhat afraid of being told at this meeting about a public relations concept of creating a new 'technique' of human relations as one might create new designs for hydraulic lifts. We can learn a great deal from Americans about thinking and automation in business, in engineering, and in so many other fields, but shouldn't we be a bit proud of the heritage of our own German industry in getting along with people? Having had to deal with human beings for almost forty years, I do not want to see my workers and employees becoming manipulated tools of a refined psychological technique so that they will act and react automatically the way I would like them to."

His statement shows that there is a mighty trend in Western Germany toward making the individual again the center of all phases of life in the industrial society. It proves that, in the long run, the future of public relations in Western Germany depends upon the training of a number of people qualified by character and ability to convince the younger generation of the necessity for stable day-by-day work in the field of human relations. Such work would be a contribution to our society, to the future of the non-Communist world, and to the welfare of industry, of which the individual is an integral part. ●

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THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS

Each quarter Dr. Donald W. Krimel selects items from the various professional journals in the social sciences which have implications for the public relations field.—Ed.

ON CULTIVATION OF THE CREATOR

"Creativity as Personality Development," by Harold H. Anderson, Michigan State University, in *ETC.: A Review of General Semantics*, Vol. XVI, No. 3.

The "Creative Staff," long familiar in advertising organizations, has become more and more prevalent in public relations. Creativity is a major concern of any progressive public relations executive. Psychologists and other social scientists recently have been devoting considerable attention to the subject, under governmental grants in some cases, and their findings should be useful to public relations.

ETC., the semanticists' remarkably readable quarterly review, has three related articles on creativity in the issue cited above. Probably the most directly useful to the public relations person is Anderson's piece. A complex but clearly stated rationale brings the psychologist-author to conclusions that indicate there are, roughly stated, three main ways of administering a "creative staff."

A restrictive "closed system" may develop in which creativity is actually diminished by administrative dominance. Familiar pattern? Anderson does not like its chances for creative success. The opposite is the "permissive" atmosphere. This is all right for a start, but it will not do well, Anderson concludes, unless there is also "confronting" of the creator: challenge, argument, constructive conflict.

The article described and its companions are sensible and thought-provoking.

SUBLIMINAL PERSUASION: A DIM VIEW

"A Televised Test of Subliminal Persuasion," by Melvin L. DeFleur and Robert M. Petranoff, Indiana University, in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 2.

Subliminal persuasion represents neither threats nor promises of any significance, this research report indicates. The project involved television as the subliminal image medium, with exposures presented during one-week and two-week periods. Subjects were pressured, subliminally, to do something complex (go to the store and buy a certain product) and something simple (stay tuned to the TV program that

follows this one). Here are some of the impressions obtained by the researchers.

1. Messages *at the level of awareness* were extremely effective in bringing about actions desired. *Subliminal* messages, under the same conditions, apparently were entirely ineffective. So, say the authors, "... subliminal communication is a very *inefficient* form of communication at best."

2. It would seem to be incorrect to assume that somehow an audience is "helpless" in regard to subliminal suggestion. Apparently the experience of living provides protective barriers—a sort of subconscious skepticism—which are activated in response to the subliminal stimuli just as they are in response to messages that arrive at the level of awareness.

3. We are bombarded by subliminal messages every day, and always have been. We cannot be entirely conscious of each of the many stimuli that almost constantly vie for our attention. Our level of awareness of each varies. Some come to our distracted attention below the level of awareness. Thus there is no virgin territory below that level. It is filled with "jamming," and we are all old hands at responding to the subliminal stimuli.

DeFleur and Petranoff conclude that "... while no single research project can be regarded as definitive or conclusive in such a complex matter, there was *absolutely no evidence whatsoever* that the subliminal messages broadcast in the present experiment had the slightest effect in persuading the mass audience."

SUBLIMINAL PERSUASION: THE SALIVARY SCHOOL

"The Effect of Subliminal Food Stimulus on Verbal Responses," by Donn Byrne, San Francisco State College, in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 43, No. 4.

Byrne finds more significance in subliminal persuasion than do DeFleur and Petranoff, but not much more. Working with smaller groups, and fewer exposures to the stimulus, he obtained partially effective subliminal communication. He flashed the word "beef" subliminally on a screen showing an educational film. Those exposed to it got hungrier than those not exposed, but strangely enough they did not get significantly hungrier for beef than for other foods.

It will be remembered that the recent revival of interest in subliminal persuasion arose from reports that sales of pop corn and Coca Cola in a theater lobby were much increased by stimuli subliminally flashed on the screen. Byrne's experiment leads him to theorize that what was stimulated was hunger and thirst drives, and that possibly any food and drink available in the lobby would have been just as popular, even though pop corn and Coca Cola were the words used as stimuli.

He does feel his results indicate that "appropriate stimulation could arouse thirst, fear, hate, anxiety, sexual desire, etc." It remains that, as DeFleur and Petranoff point out, awareness-level stimuli can do the job also, and probably much more efficiently. ●

THE IMPORTANCE OF FOCAL IDEAS

In Public Relations Programs

by STANLEY BAAR

IN "South Pacific" there is a hit song that contends that there's nothing like a dame.

This article will attempt to substantiate the proposition that in public relations practice there's nothing like an idea.

To succeed, public relations programs must have good focal ideas—the brighter, the fresher, the more original, the better. The competition for people's attention on an ever-increasing variety of fronts has probably never been greater than at this moment; hence ideas have to be really good if they are going to compete in today's world for people's minds. The failure of many a public relations program can be traced to inability to develop a strong focal idea, and we suspect that much of the criticism of "organization-man" corporate public relations today is due to the same cause. A strong focal idea commands attention internally and externally; it also—usually—gets positive results. A strong focal idea, to be more effective, must be important and personal to the audience to be reached.

How to Get a Raise for Teachers

In 1947 a group of school teachers came to us with a problem. Their pre-war salaries were fixed, and the value of the dollar had been cut sharply. Many were leaving teaching; those who stayed were taking other jobs. They wanted our help in getting better salaries.

The focal idea we decided to hit hard was: Teachers are not getting a square deal. Here's how we went about our job: First, we obtained the services of an eminent economist and asked him to assemble all the economic facts he could on the plight of the school teachers compared with

other occupations. Second, we asked the teachers to conduct a survey among their 4,000 members to find out what they did in their spare time to make ends meet.

When the economist's report was turned in, we faced the problem of getting his findings read.

To get the report read, we printed it on galley proofs, and sent the proofs to newspapers and magazine people, educators, legislators, leaders of public opinion. We asked them for comments. The report was read thoroughly because of the novel form in which it was made available. So many editorials, newspaper articles and magazine pieces resulted that there was no need to print a book.

When the report on spare time occupations was turned over to us, we found a teacher in Queens who worked evenings as a bartender. We recognized that this would shock some people, even though bartending is an honorable vocation. It raised a moral issue. It was important and personal. So we put out a press release on teachers' occupations with the teacher-bartender in the lead.

When the release arrived at the *World-Telegram*, Ed Mowery decided to go out and interview the bartender. His story broke at 10 A.M. on a Wednesday; by noon, *Life*, the newsreels, and other newspaper and publication people were out interviewing the bartender. Result, national coverage. All these steps brought action—namely, a salary increase for the teachers who had employed us, and national attention for the plight of the teachers all over the country. The reason? A strong focal idea—that teachers were not getting a square deal. That was the core of a multi-pronged effort.

The "New Look" in Dresses

Let's look at a focal idea related to another problem.

A manufacturer of middle-priced dresses came to us shortly after World War II. He wanted attention, prestige, more sales. In analyzing his problems we sensed that everyone in the field was tired of the war, was ready for new things, new approaches, new terms, new ideas.

First, we helped the manufacturer write a personal letter to the heads of department stores throughout the country. In the letter, he pointed out that the days of war-time shortages were ending and that a new era was coming in which manufacturers and retailers would have to work more closely together to sell goods. The letter created action—50 percent of those who received it wrote back, some with lengthy commentaries;

still others dropped in to visit the manufacturer in his showrooms on trips to New York.

At about this time, our client's designer was in Paris, attending the first showings of the then new Christian Dior line. She was excited about the new length that was suggested. She cabled home, and our client went all-out to turn out such garments in the \$19.95 and \$39.95 price category. Faced with the problem of publicizing the startlingly new line, we coined the phrase "The New Look." The phrase caught on; *Life*, scores of magazines and hundreds of newspapers gave it space. This publicity was backed by the sound customer relations the letter had established. It was Christian Dior himself who told our client that 90% of all editorial attention in the U. S. resulted from these efforts. The result was that, in very little time, some millions of women decided virtually overnight that every dress in their closets was out of style. Here, then, is another example of the importance of a focal idea in public relations programming.

The Story of the Paper Bathing Suit

First, the background of the problem.

In 1942, American Cyanamid had discovered melamine resin, a resin which imparted wet-strength to paper. Ten years later, in 1952, we were called in. While the product had been used during the intervening ten years, the company felt that its full potential had never been adequately realized.

Moreover, melamine resin was being challenged by a cheaper, inferior product. Some 60 percent of its market was for use in government specifications. Since the end of government use was in sight, the problem given to us was to find ways and means of stimulating and increasing the sale of this ten-year-old product, which had profit margins the company liked. What was needed, obviously, were some focal ideas in programming.

How do you go about getting attention and sales for and restoring confidence in, a ten-year-old item?

There were some 50 to 75 paper mills using this product, perhaps lethargically, but nevertheless using it. We got 25 of them to agree to cooperate with us on a press conference. Included were some of the biggest paper companies in the country—International Paper Company, St. Regis, Eastman Kodak (which uses a great deal of paper for films), and others. With the active aid of these firms, we were able to get the U. S. Government to cooperate—the Army, through its use of wet-strength paper for maps, and the U. S. Department of Commerce, for the studies which it was carrying on to test papers of various kinds.

So far so good. We were re-interesting paper companies in melamine. But we recognized that editors think of what will interest Joe and Mary Doakes. We wanted to dramatize wet-strength paper so as to get its story over with dramatic impact. This led us to a focal attention-getting idea: a paper bathing suit, not in Atlantic City, but in a hotel on Park Avenue.

We sent out invitations to the press saying that we would have models in paper bathing suits in the Sulgrave Hotel. The models we selected were not grown women, but two small children—a boy and a girl.

Collier's had a representative at the press conference. *Collier's* decided that it would like paper bathing suits for some female models it would select. They got some Aquabelles from the Aquacade, and a four-color double-page news spread appeared in that magazine.

Life wanted to do a story on wet-strength paper. Since paper bathing suits had been used by *Collier's*, that was out. So, we developed a wet-strength sail which was raced on a Star class boat in Long Island Sound.

The *Reader's Digest* followed *Collier's* and *Life* with a thorough story on paper and its growing list of uses, highlighting wet-strength.

Thus, one strong focal idea—a paper bathing suit to prove paper could be strong when wet—helped to get the program off to a good start.

Fed back to the paper mills and converters via salesmen, direct mail and advertising, this campaign began to get for melamine new attention. Product-wise, the results were fine. But we recognized that to sell more melamine, American Cyanamid needed to be portrayed for what it was—the leading supplier of chemicals to the paper industry.

We observed that the paper industry had a bad inferiority complex about its place in the American business economy. So in 1954, we decided that American Cyanamid could assume needed leadership by putting forth a major effort each February when the American Paper and Pulp Association and the Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry (some 5,000 members strong) hold their annual conventions in New York City. Here is a quick summary of efforts over a four-year period which show the application of strong focal ideas, each geared to the specific situation prevailing at a given time:

1. The first year we produced a live telecast from the Ritz Theater on Broadway. We got the American Broadcasting Company to devote a half-hour of free time for a salute to the paper industry. Top paper executives were in the audience.

2. The second year we recognized that the industry was concerned that young people were going into many industries, but not into the paper industry. Our focal idea that year was the creation of a special exhibit called "Your Life With Paper," in which an average person's use of paper was traced from birth, through school, job, military service, wedding, business and family life, period of retirement, and finally, last will and testament. Subsequently this exhibit was routed throughout the country and has been seen by upwards of a million students and adults.

3. In 1957, we sensed that the paper industry was engaged in developing new markets and new uses for paper. To further these objectives, we published for the conventions a "Daily Paper" as it might appear if published in February, 1977. In this paper, life as it might be expected to be lived twenty years from now, was dramatized by news stories and features.

4. In 1958, we recognized that a general feeling of gloom and uneasiness pervaded the paper industry. Sputnik, Mutnik and the Explorer had been added to the general uncertainty which adults had to face in the year '58. Aware of these attitudes, we created a puppet show entitled "Uncle Cy Does His Paper Work—or—The Egghead That Hatched." This conveyed, among other things, the idea that the future is bright, particularly if we will give young people with ideas an opportunity to prove their mettle.

A Picture Is Worth 1,000 Words—In Cigars, Too

Here's one other example of the use of a focal idea in programming, this time in the cigar industry.

Cigar sales were on a toboggan. At the time when public relations help was sought, people were buying less than half the number of cigars they were smoking when the decline began.

A survey provided strong evidence that the once-proud cigar, symbol of affluence and authority, had become the butt of low comedy; the prop of the comic cartoon; the trademark of the gangster, crooked politician and loan shark. In the printed word, cigars were always black "stogies," "heaters" or "cheroots."

The survey provided additional evidence. Identification of cigars with villainous characters and buffoons, in pictures and print, was a basic reason for waning popularity and purchase.

If a picture is worth thousands of words in making an impact on a man's mind, the effect is doubled where women are concerned. So, know-

ing that photos were a cause of our problems, we conceived the idea that photos could be a cure. And this was our focal idea on this front.

We made contact with the New York lensmen because more published news photos originate in New York than any other place in the United States. There are more press photographers here, too. When confronted with our idea, they expressed surprise and disbelief that their pictures were doing harm to a basic American industry.

A cigar-photo contest was started with a simple but precise set of rules. At first, judgments were held in New York by respected big name photographers. Soon the show went on the road. Meticulous care was taken to assure the acceptability of the contest, not only to the working press photographers, but to their editors as well.

Conscious effort on the part of the lensmen to find pleasant cigar scenes had the automatic effect of eliminating objectionable subjects. Today the cigar-photo contest thrives. The cigar-sales curve is happily ascending toward new highs. And our firm is now public relations counsel to the National Press Photographers Association.

In the Crystal Palace, No Focal Ideas, No Imagination

Alan Harrington, in a highly-readable but exasperating article on public relations called "The Self-Deceivers" in the September issue of *Esquire*, has quite a diatribe against our field. Notice this description, for example, of how public relations is practiced at Mr. Harrington's corporation, which he calls "The Crystal Palace":

"In corporate public relations you begin by pleasing high authority, and worry about the public later . . . There are no relations like public relations. You can go on public-relating for years without having a clear idea of what people think of you . . . From Crystal Palace headquarters we shoot public relations arrows into the air and trust that they land somewhere near the target, if we know where the target is."

If Mr. Harrington found corporate public relations life at Crystal Palace a harrowing experience, we submit it was principally because of his inability to develop, or to get his management to accept, strong focal ideas that make good sense and were aimed at specific targets—outside the company management—to accomplish specific positive results.

In Crystal Palace, as in any other type of public relations programming, there's nothing like a good focal idea. Ideas reach beyond nations and races, beyond space and time.

In short, as this article has attempted to prove, there just is nothing like an idea. ●

BOOK REVIEWS



SOME OF PR'S FRIENDS

POWER WITHOUT PROPERTY

By ADOLPH BERLE, JR.

Harcourt Brace and Co., New York: 1959, 176 pp., \$3.75

HUMAN NATURE AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

By JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Random House, New York: 1959, 211 pp., \$3.95

Like the legendary Stenka Chernichevsky who changed his name to Stanislaus Chernichevsky because the boys called him "Stinky," public relations would appear to be taking all measures short of a court order to become identified with public affairs. Continental Oil, Monsanto Chemical, Ford and a number of other companies already have managers of public affairs in place. In this view, we will all be practicing PA, and awaiting Vance Packard's inevitable book, *The Hidden Affairs*.

But evidence is a tricky business. As the law courts and dozens of hapless victims have discovered, unfortunately, absolutely positive identification too often turns out to be absolutely wrong. The average witness in a count of 20,000 criminal cases described the person he had seen as five inches too tall and eight years too old. Public relations and its clients may be subject to a similar phenomenon. For the trend, so-called, to public affairs is neither that big nor that old; it is vitally necessary nevertheless.

What seems to be happening instead is that public relations is tentatively and slowly trying to grow up to larger responsibilities. Indeed, in an economy where the Jaguar is a realizable dream for every man and economic decisions may turn on what Mrs. K. says to Mr. K. at the breakfast table in Usonia 19 missile-minutes away, any public relations practitioner worth his typewriter simply cannot afford to ignore the larger areas of public affairs and their cross currents of opinion. But between the saying and doing lies a peppery crossfire set up by friends as well as foes. Friends like Calvin Hoover¹ make the job of understanding economic, social, and political trends immeasurably harder by overstatement. Foes like Bernard Nossiter² and Alan Harrington³ deny public relations and its

¹ Calvin B. Hoover, "Can Capitalism Win the Intellectuals?," *Harvard Business Review*, September-October, 1959

² Bernard D. Nossiter, "Management's Cracked Voice," *Harvard Business Review*, September-October, 1959

³ Alan Harrington, "The Self-Deceivers," *Esquire Magazine*, September, 1959

business clients the credit for trying to resolve the complexities of 20th Century America.

With Friends Like These . . .

One more "friend" like Hoover will foreclose forever whatever opportunity business and public relations have to work out a rapport with the intellectual, which, incidentally, Hoover never defines. Says Hoover, "The western intellectual tends to feel a kinship with the communist as a fellow critic . . ." or "many intellectuals accept it as axiomatic that the Soviet Union is somehow a 'workers state'" and so on. This wide, indiscriminate brush of tar, vulture feathers and red paint blots out all the signposts to mutual understanding between the intellectual and management and makes the job of public relations infinitely more difficult. In roasting the intellectual, Hoover seems to be adopting the attitude so prevalent in management that there are no friendly critics and forgets completely that vinegar never was much of a fly catcher.

Foe, or as he prefers to call people in public relations, one-time liar Alan Harrington has parlayed a cute portrayal of the extremes of corporate opulence that first appeared in *The Nation* as "The Crystal Palace" into a journalistic nuisance and a forthcoming book. This will undoubtedly be promoted by the "PR techniques" Mr. Harrington seems to deplore and the time may come even for him when, as he writes, "as long as we have absurdity in the world, we can always use PR techniques to cover it up."

Meanwhile Harrington's passionate advocacy of the elimination of public relations ("there is no real need") doesn't make very much constructive sense. He has been close to the seats of power; he knows better. He is surely aware of the complex interrelationships between a company and its numerous publics. The corporation cannot hide in a corner even if it would. It needs to understand the social, political, and economic trends that affect its future and the future of the country. It might have served public relations and Harrington better had he read just a bit further in Socrates whom Harrington quotes profusely in *Esquire*. "The partisan," Socrates wrote, "when he is engaged in a dispute, cares nothing about the rights of the question, but is anxious only to convince his hearers of his own assertions."

Bernard Nossiter is quite another kind of critic. Years of newspaper experience have given him an uncanny ability to puncture pomposity. And one point he seems to be making in "Management's Cracked Voice" is that there is still a good deal of confirmation for what *Fortune* pointed out almost ten years ago: "nobody seems to be listening" to business. But

Nossiter is also dangerously ambivalent. From a beginning that deflates the value of techniques to monitor public opinion, Nossiter concludes that business management's most important problem is to become more carefully attuned to public attitudes. Nor is Nossiter certain whether he likes the visible or the sneaky approach to political action. Business, he says somewhat scornfully, has many invisible political ties so it's nonsense to beat the drums for visible participation.

Can Pragmatism Replace Doctrinairism?

During the late thirties it was fashionable to ask whether Hitler was sincere as though an affirmative answer would somehow ease the confusion in the minds of those who asked it. Whether the Nossiters are sincere is also irrelevant. For the fact is that the movement to broaden the umbrella of public relations to take in public affairs has necessity on its side. Indeed, attention to public affairs is an imperative. Business needs increasingly to examine social, political and economic opinion as it is forming today, not as it was confirmed twenty years ago. It is this opinion formation that Adolph Berle calls the "public consensus" and believes is the final arbiter of economic and consequently political power in the country today.

In what amounts to a series of essays, Mr. Berle surveys the American economy with its preponderance of large organizations and finds that it works "remarkably well." In this sense he is a pragmatist. In much of his survey he is also a legal analyst. And, while he is never quite able to join the roles, *Power Without Property* is sure to become as much of a classic as his earlier work with Gardiner Means, *The Corporation and Private Property*.

What bothers Mr. Berle basically is the enormous potential for misuse of the power that resides today in American business. With the top 500 corporations dominating about two-thirds of industry in an era of management control, Berle also finds that 60 per cent of industry's capital needs are supplied internally and much of the rest by so-called institutional investors—pension funds, mutual funds and insurance companies. In this complex, ownership control by "public", scattered shareowners has disappeared and been replaced by the potential control of a relatively small number of trustees. And, because the trustees normally are inactive, management in effect becomes self-perpetuating. It selects its board of directors who in turn select management.

Yet, Berle finds that "directors of corporations whose control is held by the "public" . . . probably pay greater attention to the unwritten, un-

crystallized, but very real standards set up by the public consensus than do the holders of undisputed control." For the "public consensus" is after all the forerunner of public opinion; one is the establishment of principles, the other is the specific application of those principles acting through political intervention.

In short, Berle finds "the ultimate power which the individual has is the fact of his independent political existence" with the result that "we seem to be moving toward a civilization in which economic organization is powerful in terms of physical acts of production and distribution, but whose power is severely limited in terms of determining wants." Clearly, this is not a picture of the individual at the mercy of the power elite, the hidden persuader and the organization man. But it is a picture in which public relations broadening its scope to include public affairs has a determinative role to play, simply because there is an indispensable need for understanding the public consensus and its continuing development.

An Inquiry into Values and Characteristics

Joseph Wood Krutch is also bothered about power. His concern, however, is not so much about who leads whom, but who directs what or what directs whom. Specifically, does the machine exist for us, or more likely as Krutch believes, have we come to exist for the machine? Almost as an extension and elaboration into the areas of education, living habits and morals of Galbraith's *The Unconventional Wisdom*, Krutch points out how very much our lives are concerned with keeping the consumption machine going. "Prosperity," he writes, "like the other creations of technology is a tiger whose riders do not dare dismount," and getting and spending as a national activity is no more acceptable when it is renamed production and distribution.

Without saying so, Krutch is questioning the plight of the individual in the modern economy who can not join Thoreau at Walden just as business is concerned about the role of the individual in the modern organization. "We have forgotten," he says, "that know-how is a dubious endowment unless it is accompanied by other 'knows'—by 'know what', 'know why', and—most important of all at the present moment—'know whether.'"

But there is an ambivalence here as there is in Nossiter. His picture of the captive consumer and citizen is cracked badly when he points out, "the year 1958 may go down in history as the year when Americans first began to manifest some dissatisfaction with two of the things they had become most proud of: their automobiles and their schools." This dissatisfaction has, of course, been "manifest" time and again in the con-

sumer field, often enough surely to question seriously the notion of the consumer as a puppet.

Altogether, ambivalence or not, Krutch is helping to form the public consensus. And in a chapter headed "The Failure of Attention," Krutch asks one of the pertinent questions with which public relations broadened into public affairs must concern itself: "Is the acknowledged 'failure of communication' the result of defective methods and to be remedied by devising better ones, or is it the result of a failure of attention on the part of those addressed which further simplification will only encourage?"

—DON COLEN

THE NEW INFLATION

by WILLARD THORPE AND RICHARD E. QUANDT

McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York, 1959, 228 pp., \$5.00

"Inflation may be a very old problem but it is with us in a new setting, raising new issues of national policy." It is the new setting and the new issues which inflation has invigorated that economists Thorpe and Quandt discuss in this very readable primer of the nation's most misunderstood problem. The whys and wherefores of inflation can raise as much heat as politics or religion; the solutions are equally controversial. And while the authors see inflation as a built-in factor of the economy, they believe "we should be able to prevent inflation from getting out of hand and causing a major upset in the economy." For the public relations specialist who cannot afford the time for a full course in economics, "The New Inflation" is an admirable summary of who and what put the creep in creeping inflation and how it can be held in check.

CASEBOOK IN PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

By RAYMOND SIMON

William C. Brown Company, Dubuque, Iowa, 1959, 189 pp., \$3.25

Raymond Simon, whose writings on public relations education are familiar to readers of the Quarterly, is Associate Professor of Public Relations, Utica College of Syracuse University. Through field work and internships, he has attempted to give his students the practical aspects of public relations which some practitioners feel is neglected in course work.

The new *Casebook* is as practical as a classroom text can be. The cases represent, for the most part, actual situations. A great variety of

problems are considered, ranging from simple publicity releases through planning and budgeting, oral presentations, speeches, letters, to specific and difficult public relations problems.

No approved solutions to these case problems are given. Thus the success of this book will depend upon the maturity of the student, the time allowed for discussion, and the skill and knowledge of the instructor.

In format, too, the book is workmanlike: 8½x11 page size, spiral binding, and with perforated pages for outside assignments.

EMPLOYEE PUBLICATIONS

By WILLIAM C. HALLEY

Chilton Company, Philadelphia, 1959, 139 pp., \$5.00

A rundown on the use of employee publications by management, based primarily on the experience of the Du Pont Company where the author is Manager of the Plant Publication Service.

ECONOMIC PLAN AND ACTION—Recent American Developments

By CHARLTON OGBURN

Harper & Brothers, New York, 1959, 287 pp., \$4.75

In the years since World War II public relations has had its greatest growth. Writing about these years Charlton Ogburn says, "No period since the adoption of the United States Constitution has been potentially more dangerous for our country, or indeed more promising . . . Our political wisdom and our moral stamina have both been tried, but it has been, perhaps, our economic vitality that has been the most severely tested of all."

The crucial issues faced in this recent period—such as economic aid, farm surpluses, the federal budget, collective bargaining, U. S. business activities abroad—have by no means been resolved. But the succinct review of these issues provided by this book will be a boon to the busy PR practitioner seeking an understanding of the social and economic forces which will determine the future. Much of the material is drawn from studies made by the National Planning Association.



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